

**In this issue:**

Letter from Judith 1  
 Letter from Judith cont. 2  
 H.S. Parent Committee Being Formed 3  
 H.S. Committee cont. Notes from the Chef 4  
 Grandparent's Day Middle School Update 5  
 Vision Meeting OFPO in Action 6  
 Noble County HINI Update 7

**Upcoming Events**

Nov. 19 • Coffee with the Head 8:45 AM  
 Victorian Farmhouse  
 • All School Parent Education 6-7 PM  
 Victorian Farmhouse  
 Oak Farm's Vision, Values, and Principles  
 RSVP for event and childcare to Kelly.  
 (Prepayment for childcare due on or before November 17.)  
 Nov. 24 Grandparent's Day  
**11:45 AM Dismissal for All Students**  
 (Half-day accreditation in-service for staff)  
 Nov. 25- **Thanksgiving Break**  
 Nov. 27 **School Closed**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## Headlines from Oak Farm Montessori School

502 Lemper Road Avilla, IN 46710

[www.oakfarm.org](http://www.oakfarm.org)

260-897-4270

*Our mission is to provide a Montessori environment that inspires children to reach their potential through meaningful work.*

### FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

#### Foundations For Success

Recently one of our parents who teaches a course called "Foundations for Success" to university freshmen shared his letter to the President of IPFW (Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne) with me.

Most classes in one's college experience focus on the "hard" skills and disciplines of math, science, English, writing, as well as a heavy dose in one's field of study. This focus is necessary and critical to be both well-rounded (due to Gen Ed courses) and competent in a field (due to classes from one's declared major).

However, it will be the "soft" skills that will more than likely dictate the success of most college graduates in the real world. These soft skills include areas such as the following: setting goals, self-discipline, time management, taking responsibility, self-motivation, working within teams, prioritizing tasks, being secure in who you are, knowing your strengths and weaknesses, relating to superiors and subordinates, emotional intelligence, as well as other basic leadership skills. As we all know, most people get promoted and demoted in life based on these areas even more than the competency of their "hard" skill.

He shared this letter with me because he sadly witnesses how many college freshmen are weak in these crucial areas of critical life-skills.

Even if they excel in their discipline of study or in other academic subjects, it is their handle on these intangible life skills that makes the difference as to whether they are succeeding or failing in college. And we all know, this will be the difference-maker in their success in life as well. Sadly, I see many students struggling in these areas.

Montessori named these skills "Practical Life", a component of the Oak Farm curriculum that runs throughout all ages and program levels. Practical Life's aim is to help the child do things for himself. Montessori wrote, "Just as the little child cries out 'help me to do it by myself' through his actions, so does the older child demonstrate the same need at successive levels of sophistication as he grows."

Our lessons in Practical Life are the very heart of Montessori education. As young children wash tables, pour liquids, polish silver, and sweep and dust, they are developing the inner aptitudes of calmness, order, and concentration as well as coordination and fine motor skills. At the same time—through the process of learning to meet their own needs, learning to take care of the classroom environment, and through the experience of helping others—children in Montessori programs begin to develop independence, self-confidence, and self-respect. They also begin to develop life skills such as selecting and prioritizing, initiating, organizing, and persevering to completion.

Another critical area of Practical Life is "Grace and Courtesy", the language of respect. A few Grace and Courtesy lessons presented and practiced in the classroom at all

*Continued on page 2*

## LETTER FROM JUDITH

*Continued from page 1*  
levels are:

- Saying please and thank you
- Using an appropriate indoor voice
- Begging pardon/apologizing
- Asking for permission to observe
- Asking for assistance
- Asking for permission to join in an activity
- Declining a request graciously
- Greetings
- Shaking hands
- Greeting visitors/offering coffee or tea/serving as a tour guide
- Expressing complements and appreciation
- Expressing empathy and compassion
- Expressing one's feelings appropriately
- Setting personal boundaries and being appropriately assertive

Grace and Courtesy builds emotional and social intelligence. Students learn to take responsibility, to work within teams, to be secure in who they are. Learning one's strengths and weaknesses, and how to relate to superiors and subordinates, forms the foundation for success in life.

Often, people think Practical Life applies only to the young child when in fact it applies at all levels of our programs at Oak Farm. Here are a few examples of elementary and middle school lessons in Practical Life:

Animal training  
Assertiveness skills  
Project and time management  
Stress management  
Personal goal setting  
Knowledge of and respect for common laws  
Care of one's clothing: ironing, using the washing machine, spot removal  
Child care and babysitting  
Computer skills  
Cooking  
Public speaking  
Peer mediation  
Community service  
Mentoring younger children  
Earning money for school projects  
First aid  
Group communication skills  
Growing food and flowers in the garden  
Growing plants in a greenhouse  
How to resolve conflicts peacefully  
How to use a public library

How to use public transportation  
How to win and keep friends  
How to write formal letters  
Map reading - finding your way about town  
Nutrition: menu planning  
Operating audio-visual equipment  
Outdoor camping and hiking skills  
Photography  
Physical fitness: keeping in shape  
Planning a luncheon for guests  
Planning your own field trip  
Practical politics: How to speak out effectively on public issues  
Practical rules of social etiquette  
Preparing food for a large group  
Preserving food: canning, drying  
Public speaking  
Raising classroom pets  
Raising small farm animals: chickens, ducks, rabbits, goats, or sheep  
Safety at home and school  
Simple acts of charity and kindness  
Study skills  
Swimming  
Test-taking skills  
The young citizen and the law  
Typing: speed and accuracy  
Using hand tools for carpentry  
Writing and putting together a play

In summary, Practical Life lessons have both individual developmental objectives like calmness, concentration, cooperation, self-discipline, and self-reliance and social objectives, such as self-awareness, sensitivity to others, and service to the community. Lessons in Practical Life and their application to daily living are as important at the toddler level as they are at the adolescent level.

As the letter to the President of IPFW reads, "If I were leading a university and looking at the quality of the graduates, as they represent that university throughout life, I would be as concerned about their soft skills as I would be about their field of study competency. Although these soft skills are indirectly addressed and evaluated throughout the natural flow of their coursework and grade evaluations, it seems critical to me that they spend ample time directly addressing these life-long skills that will undergird any job they have in life."

At Oak Farm, not only do we prepare children for life but we help build their foundation for success.

## HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COMMITTEE BEING FORMED

By Jackie Henry



**This remodeled garage was adjacent to the School's first classroom.**

For those of you whom I do not know, please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jackie Henry. My son, Caleb, is a seventh-year student at Oak Farm Montessori Middle School. Our family's history with Oak Farm is a long one. Caleb has attended Oak Farm since its inception nearly a decade ago. I would like to share with you a history of the development of Oak Farm Montessori School. Your child's school opened in January 2000 as a single Primary classroom with, I believe, eight children. This first classroom was located in what is now the upper elementary building; however, it looked much different back then. It was a ranch-style home remodeled as a classroom with a separate garage.



**Construction begins on the original barn.**

Later that same year in September of 2000, the Red Barn, an actual barn retrofitted to how it appears today, began housing students. The Primary students moved into one-half of this building while the first elementary classroom occupied the other half of the building. The ranch-style home and separate garage then became the infant and toddler classrooms.



**The Red Barn with silo in place.**



**The foundation of the Victorian Farmhouse**



**The Victorian Farmhouse takes shape.**



**The original brick farmhouse at the Middle School.**

In the fall of 2001 the Victorian Farmhouse was completed and the infants, toddlers, and primary students all moved into this new space. For the first time they all shared a building and they continue to do so today. There was a lot of excitement in the air for students, faculty, and parents alike. All of the elementary students remained in the Red Barn, for now.

In the fall of 2003 the upper elementary students moved from the Red Barn to the newly remodeled Green Farmhouse, the building you see today, while the lower elementary students remained in the Red Barn, and still do.

And finally, in the fall of 2005 the Middle School was complete and came alive with its first students, faculty and staff.

## HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COMMITTEE BEING FORMED

*Continued from page 3*

It is important to acknowledge that all of these advancements took many resources, as well as time, to complete—time to acquire property, meet with architects and contractors, hire and train teachers and staff, order classroom supplies, set up classrooms, and create interest in the school through marketing, among other things.

At the Middle School parent orientation in August a question was raised by one of the parents regarding the status and progress of a high school at Oak Farm. Judith's response was that it remains a dream and vision for the school. Recently I sent Judith a letter to let her know I would like to be involved in helping to make the high school dream become a reality and asked her to "please let me know what I can do to get this ball rolling." I know from speaking with some of you that you share this sentiment. With Judith's support, I am writing today to all of you to begin, in Judith's words, "establishing a committee of parents who are committed to a high school and will put effort into making the dream come true." This is the first step in what is sure to be many, toward establishing an Oak Farm Montessori High School. Like you, I do not know exactly what this journey will entail, nor the exact time and tasks it will involve. And like so many Oak Farm Montessori students have done since the school began, we will learn many new things and experience many firsts. Please contact me via phone (260) 897-2695 or by email [jhenry7@yahoo.com](mailto:jhenry7@yahoo.com) by Tuesday December 1<sup>st</sup>, if you are interested in joining this committee that will help pave the way to benefit both current and future students of Oak Farm Montessori School.

Sincerely,  
Jackie Henry

"No one could make a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." Edmund Burke

Together we can make a difference for future generations.

---

## NOTES FROM THE CHEF

**By Jill Hoffelder**

Thank you to Rosie Sitko, Angie Moriarity, and Cobin, for assisting in preparing the meal for Parent Fall Fun Night. We could not have asked for a more beautiful day to gather together and enjoy good healthy food and company. The Escarole & Rice Soup with Chicken that was prepared for the event is one of my favorites. This is a hearty and healthy soup that is easy to prepare and can be made with or without the chicken. Escarole is a member of the endive family and has a mild peppery flavor. Vegetable stock can also replace the chicken stock. Meijer supermarket carries their own brand of organic vegetable, chicken, and beef stock.

### **Escarole & Rice Soup with Chicken**

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive-oil	2 1/2 cups of cubed raw chicken breast
1 small onion, chopped	1 14-ounce can whole tomatoes, drained, seeded and chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced	1/4 teaspoon salt
1 head escarole, thinly sliced	Freshly ground pepper to taste
7 cups reduced-sodium chicken stock, divided	2 tablespoons grated Asiago or Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup brown rice	

1. Heat oil in stock pot over medium-heat. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Add escarole and 1 cup broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

2. Stir in the remaining 6 cups broth and bring to a simmer. Add rice and simmer, covered for 10 minutes. Add chicken and tomatoes and cook, covered, until the rice is tender and the chicken is no longer pink inside, about 5 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls and top with cheese.

## GRANDPARENT'S DAY INVITATION MAILED OCTOBER 29

You are cordially invited to Oak Farm Montessori School's annual

### **Grandparent's Day**

Tuesday November 24, 2009

8:45 a.m.	Welcome by Head of School and Coffee in the Victorian Farmhouse
9:15 a.m.	Classroom Visit 1
10:00 a.m.	Classroom Visit 2 – Please arrive at this time if you have only one grandchild to visit. Coffee will be served again at 10:45.
10:45 a.m.	Coffee in the Victorian Farmhouse Multipurpose Room
11:00 a.m.	Music Program in the Victorian Farmhouse Recreation Room
11:30 a.m.	Closing

#### Important Notes:

This event is for grandparents of Primary, Elementary, and Middle School students.

If you have a grandchild in Elementary or Middle School only, please go directly to your grandchild's building to start your day. Coffee will be served again at 10:45 prior to the musical performance.

Driveway #2 – Lower Elementary located in the Red Barn.

Upper Elementary located in the Green Farmhouse.

Driveway #3 – Middle School located in the Brick House.

A bus will be available to shuttle you from building to building if needed.

Please feel free to call Sarah Shanton-Cox with any questions at (260) 897-4270 ext. 25200 or send an email to [sshanton@oakfarmschool.com](mailto:sshanton@oakfarmschool.com).

---

## PLANNING A BARN, SHAKESPEARE, AND COLUMBUS ON TRIAL

### By Elizabeth Smith-Meyer

Last week the students met with an architect to continue planning their barn. They had already sent him drawings and possible layouts, and he was able to incorporate their visions into his own practical ideas. He shared his own drawing with them so they could better see how an architect works and the tools he uses to turn ideas into more tangible concepts. After the meeting they continued working on their separate occupations of the actual barn study as well as animal and greenhouse study. They hope to finish up their occupations soon so that they can present their research and their recommendations to the Board in December.

In academic work the 6<sup>th</sup> years continue to study ancient civilizations. They are still finalizing research papers on Classical Greece, but now they are reading Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to study Ancient Rome as well. One class of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> years are reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* as they will soon begin a study on Colonial America. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> years are also still finishing their study of exploration and discovery by writing research papers about a character they will portray in a play we are writing in which Columbus is put on trial for his actions in the "New World."

Now that we are into the second quarter, the students are being offered and accepting managerial positions. These are positions at the middle school that require a student to take a supervisory lead. Some of these positions include hospitality for tours and visitors, catering for guests and special events, communications for newsletter articles, and service for local and regional community service. The students were selected for these positions based on the willingness they've shown to take initiative in their community. More of these leadership opportunities will be available as the need arises and as more students accept responsibility for their community.

## SHARING THE VISION AND VALUES OF OAK FARM SCHOOL: AN EVENING YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

On Thursday, November 19 at 6 PM, Judith Cunningham will share the vision of Oak Farm Montessori School and the values that sustain it. Last year we documented our conversations with Lorene about her founding vision and values. She shared her deepest thoughts about the school and what it should mean to the community and to Montessori education across the globe. The resulting document is a "road map" that reflects Lorene's values and the needs of our community. This road map guides our path and drives the long term future for Oak Farm while providing a plan that will enable us to sustain our mission.

We want to share with you both the long range vision and the values and principles that create our culture at this hour-long parent education event.

We look forward to seeing you. For your convenience childcare for Primary and elementary-aged students will be available for a cost of \$5 per participant, prepaid. Please RSVP for the event and childcare to Kelly on or before November 17.

---

## OFPO IN ACTION

### Join Us in Honoring Grandparents on November 24th

Join us in "sprinkling stardust" over the very special people in our children's lives, their grandparents! Adult volunteers are needed to assist with Grandparent's Day by greeting guests, setting and cleaning up, and providing baked goods. Please contact Heather Barth at [ofpovolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:ofpovolunteer@gmail.com) or call (260) 704-2753.

---

## FROM NOBLE COUNTY'S CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER DR. GERALD WARRENER: CLINIC UPDATES, QUESTIONS & ANSWERS REGARDING HINI VACCINES

The date and times for the next two HINI Vaccine Clinics have been scheduled:

- **Tuesday, November 17th**, 4pm to 7pm, at the Stones Hill Church, 151 W Stone's Hill Rd., Ligonier, IN 46767
- **Monday, November 23rd**, 4pm to 7pm, at Saint Mary's Elementary School, 232 North Main St, Avilla, IN 46701

The priority groups have been expanded to include: pregnant women, children/young adults age 6 months thru 24years old, persons who live with or provide care for infants less than 6 month old, adults under age 60 with chronic health problems and healthcare workers.

### **What is the difference between the HINI injectable (shot) and the HINI nasal spray vaccine?**

There are two types of HINI flu vaccine being produced:

The injectable vaccine (called inactivated vaccine because it has killed virus in it) is injected into the muscle, like the annual flu shot. It is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people, people with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women. If you are moderately or severely ill, you might be advised to wait until you recover before getting the vaccine. If you have a mild cold or other illness, there is usually no need to wait.

The nasal spray vaccine (called LAIV for Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine) is a vaccine made with live, weakened viruses that cannot grow at normal body temperature and is given via a nasal sprayer. It is approved for use in healthy people ages 2 years to 49 years who are not pregnant. The vaccine virus is attenuated (weakened) so it will not cause illness. If you have any nasal congestion, you will need to wait to get the vaccine.

## **NOBLE COUNTRY H1N1 FLU UPDATE**

*Continued from page 5*

About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against 2009 H1N1 influenza virus infection will develop in the body.

### **How safe and effective is the H1N1 vaccine?**

The H1N1 vaccines are made just like seasonal flu vaccines. They are expected to be as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines. They will not prevent "flu-like" illnesses caused by other viruses. Both vaccines are expected to be effective against 2009 H1N1 virus.

### **Are there any risks to getting the vaccine?**

A vaccine, like any medicine, could cause a serious problem, such as a severe allergic reaction. But the risk of any vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. If you should experience any signs of a severe reaction, such as high fever, difficulty breathing or behavior changes, call a doctor right away.

What side effects are associated with the H1N1 vaccine?

With the nasal spray vaccine, side effects can include runny nose, headache, cough, and sometimes fever in children. With the injectable vaccine, there may be a slight fever or body aches and some soreness at the injection site. This usually goes away in a day or two.

### **Who should not get the H1N1 vaccine?**

You should not get 2009 H1N1 vaccine if you have a severe (life-threatening) allergy to eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you have had bad reactions to flu vaccine in the past. Children younger than six months of age can not get a flu vaccine.

### **Should I get vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 even if I have had a flu-like illness this year?**

The symptoms of influenza (flu-like illnesses) are similar to those caused by many other viruses. Even when flu viruses are causing large numbers of people to get sick, other viruses are also causing illnesses. Since most people with flu-like illnesses will not be tested for H1N1 this season, the majority will not know whether they were infected with 2009 H1N1 flu or a different virus. If a person was ill but it was not confirmed as 2009 H1N1 infection, the person should still get vaccinated if a doctor recommends it.

### **Will the H1N1 vaccine protect me against seasonal flu?**

The H1N1 vaccine will not prevent seasonal flu. You should also get a seasonal influenza vaccine when it is available to protect you from seasonal flu.

### **What is the recommended interval between the first and second dose for children 9 years of age and under?**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that the two doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine be separated by 4 weeks.

### **Can the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine and the seasonal nasal spray vaccine be given at the same time to the same person?**

No. The seasonal nasal spray vaccine and the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine should not be given at the same time. This is because the nasal spray vaccines might not be as effective if given together. It is fine to receive the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray at the same time as the seasonal influenza (flu) shot, or the seasonal flu nasal spray at the same time as the 2009 H1N1 flu shot vaccine. Nasal spray forms of vaccine are best given a minimum of 28 days apart in order to be the most effective.

### **When is it too late to get the H1N1 vaccine?**

It's possible that there may be waves of 2009 H1N1 activity during the 2009-2010 flu season that hit communities more than once over the course of the influenza season. Our typical flu season peaks in January or February but can last as late as May.

*Information was shared by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health and made specific for Noble County schools by Noble County's Chief Health Officer Dr. Gerald Warrener*